

## **TORNADOES**

When a tornado is coming, you have only a short amount of time to make life-or-death decisions. Advance planning and quick response are the keys to surviving a tornado.

The best protection during a tornado is on the lowest level of a building, preferably a basement or storm cellar. Tornadoes strike with incredible velocity. Wind speeds may approach 300 miles per hour. These winds can uproot trees and structures and turn harmless objects into deadly missiles, all in a matter of seconds. Mobile homes are particularly vulnerable to tornadoes.

Injuries or deaths from tornadoes mostly occur when buildings collapse or when people are hit by flying objects or are caught trying to out drive the twister in a car. Tornadoes are most destructive when they touch ground. Normally a tornado will stay on the ground less than twenty minutes; however, one tornado can touch ground several times in different areas.

### **WHAT IS A TORNADO?**

A tornado is a violent windstorm characterized by a twisting, funnel-shaped cloud. It is spawned by a thunderstorm and produced when cool air overrides a layer of warm air, forcing warm air to rise rapidly. The damage from a tornado is a result of the high wind velocity and wind-blown debris. Tornado season is generally March through August, although tornadoes can occur at any time of year. They tend to occur in the afternoons and evenings; more than 80 percent of all tornadoes hit between noon and midnight.

### **TORNADO WATCH**

*A tornado watch is* issued by the National Weather Service when weather conditions are such that tornadoes are likely to develop. This is the time to remind family members where the safest places are located, keep alert for changing weather conditions and listen to the radio or television for further advisories.

### **TORNADO WARNING**

*A tornado warning is* issued when a tornado has been sighted or indicated by radar. At this point, the danger is very serious, and everyone should go to a safe place, turn on a battery-operated radio or television and wait for the "all clear" by the authorities.

### **TORNADO DANGER SIGNS**

**Large hail:** Tornadoes are spawned from very powerful thunderstorms, and the most powerful storms produce large hail. Tornadoes frequently emerge from near the hail-producing portion of the storm.

**Calm before the storm:** Before a tornado hits, the wind may die down and the air may become very still.

**Cloud of debris:** An approaching cloud of debris can mark the location of a tornado even if a funnel is not visible.

**Funnel cloud:** A visible rotating extension of the cloud base is a sign that a tornado may develop. A tornado is evident when one or more of the clouds turns greenish and a dark funnel descends.

**Roaring noise:** The high winds of a tornado can cause a roar that is often compared to the sound of a freight train.

**Calm behind the storm:** Tornadoes generally occur near the trailing edge of a severe thunderstorm. It is not uncommon to see clear, sunlit skies behind a tornado.

## MOBILE HOMES

Mobile homes are particularly vulnerable. A mobile home can overturn very easily even if precautions have been taken to tie down the unit. When a tornado warning is issued, take shelter in a building with a strong foundation. If shelter is not available, lie in a ditch or low-lying area a safe distance from the unit.

## WHAT TO DO BEFORE A TORNADO

Learn the tornado danger signs.

Have the recommended emergency supplies on hand.

Know the difference between a *"tornado watch"* and a *"tornado warning."*

Follow advisories issued by forecasters which describe the location, strength and movement of the storm or tornado.

Designate an area in the home as a shelter and practice having everyone go there in response to a tornado threat.

## DURING A TORNADO

### If at home

Go at once to the basement, storm cellar or the lowest level of the building.

If there is no basement, go to an inner hallway or a small inner room without windows, such as a bathroom or closet.

Get away from windows.

Go to the center of the room. Stay away from corners as they tend to attract debris. Use arms to protect head and neck.

### **If outdoors**

If possible, get into a building.

If shelter is not available or there is no time to get indoors, lie in a ditch or low-lying area or crouch near a strong building.

Use arms to protect head and neck.

### **If at work or school**

Go to the basement or to an inside hallway at the lowest level. Avoid wide rooms such as auditoriums, cafeterias or large hallways.

Get under a piece of sturdy furniture such as a workbench or heavy table or desk and hold on to it.

Use arms to protect head and neck.

### **If in a car**

Never try to outdrive a tornado in a car or truck. Tornadoes can change direction quickly and can lift a car or truck and toss it through the air.

Get out of the car immediately and take shelter in a nearby building. If there is no time to get indoors, get out of the car and lie in a ditch or low-lying area away from the vehicle.

## **AFTER THE TORNADO**

Check for injured or trapped persons.

Give first aid when appropriate. Don't try to move the seriously injured unless they are in immediate danger of further injury.

Call for help if telephones still work.

Turn on radio or television to get the latest emergency information.

Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline, or other flammable liquids immediately. Leave the building if you smell gas or chemical fumes.

Stay out of damaged buildings. Return home only when authorities say it is safe.